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ABSTRACT

The Pittsburgh Middle School Teacher Corps Project (PMSTCP) is a competency-based, field oriented master's program developed and implemented jointly by the Pittsburgh Board of Education and the University of Pittsburgh. The PMSTCP has developed a model which focuses on competencies needed to train teachers to work with urban middle school students using a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to individualized instruction. The program encompasses both the use of modules as instructional vehicles and the design of a comprehensive delivery system which delineates program structure and provides for flexibility within the structure as needed. The delivery system includes the field based, community oriented setting, on-site instruction, a clinical/resource supervisory support system, and a mechanism for continual evaluation. Efforts are being directed to examine closely the relationships between learning theory and classroom practice, between societal sensitivity and individual values, and between the roles of the teacher in the teaching/learning setting and the learning behaviors of students. Formative evaluation of the program is being conducted on a continual basis. The most important question is, What type of teacher training program will make the most difference for learners? (Author/PB)

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PITTSBURGH MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CORPS PROJECT

Part One

The Pittsburgh Middle School Teacher Corps Project is a competence-based, field oriented master's program. Developed and implemented jointly by the Pittsburgh Board of Education and the University of Pittsburgh, the project is federally funded with the Board acting as prime contractor and the University as sub-contractor for the training program. Given the movement both nationally and locally toward middle schools, the PMSTCP has developed a model which focuses on the competencies needed to train teachers to work with urban middle school students using a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to individualized instruction. The program encompasses both the use of modules as instructional vehicles and the design of a comprehensive delivery system which delineates program structure and provides for flexibility within the structure as needed. The delivery system includes the field based, community oriented setting, on-site instruction, a clinical/resource supervisory support system, and a mechanism for continual evaluation. Highlighted by the cooperation between the Pittsburgh Board of Education and the University, efforts are being directed to examine closely the relationships between learning theory and classroom practice, between societal sensitivity and individual values, and between the roles of the teacher in the teaching/learning setting and the learning behaviors of students. The most important question is: What type of teacher training program will make the most difference for learners?

The PMSTCP has been designed to explore answers to that question and to enable teacher educators to examine the implications of their own decisions and value positions for future teachers.

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Part Two

Description and Development of the Program

Developed cooperatively by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, and the School of Education, University of Pittsburgh, this program is designed to develop the competencies needed by teachers who work with urban middle school students. Having been selected through an intensive interview process, twenty interns are working at two Pittsburgh middle school sites. Two intern supervisors at each site have direct responsibility for supervising intern work. A University faculty member acts as site coordinator, working at the site two days a week in a resource/facilitator/supervisory capacity with the intern supervisors and as individual resource/instructors for resident staff members who are cooperating in program implementation. Approximately twenty-six teachers at each site are using modules and contracting with individual interns for competence demonstration.

Competencies for interns have been identified and clustered in modules, i.e., Individualized Instruction, Questioning Strategies, Test Construction. Each module contains a pretest, opt-out chart, and the body of the module which specifies both knowledge and skills needed for competence demonstration. Of special significance is the final stage of the module, the demonstration contract. Here the student is expected to be at a problem solving level, given the module focus, and to design and implement a teaching/learning situation which will enable him or her to demonstrate competence. In executing the contract, the intern synthesizes module competencies into a plan of action that takes on unique expression in the particular contract academic content area. Of equal importance at this stage is the Teaching Competency Profile, an instrument which specifies planning, teaching, and evaluation behaviors and which is used by the intern, the intern supervisor, and the resident teacher with whom the intern has worked to evaluate contract performance.

An important aspect of the program is the community component. Here, interns work ten hours each week in the community with parents, students and community agencies. Interns, through directed activities, conceptualize the community, study and analyze the community (leaders, sub-cultures, agencies), enter the community and plan to interact with the community. Interns will thus become aware of the existing political, economic, and social forces which act either to facilitate or limit educational opportunities for students.

The program has three components: school, university, and community. Each area contributes to the development of comprehensive competence--the ability of the intern to function at a problem solving level, to bring to bear on a situation the appropriate knowledge and/or skill necessary to identify the inherent need or problem, to consider alternatives, to select a course of action and to evaluate the results. The program incorporates the dynamics of individual and group learning. It involves individuals at all levels in the collaborative decision making process and endeavors to be responsive to intern as well as component needs.

Objectives for the Pittsburgh Middle School Teacher Corps Program

The following objectives have been identified for the University program:

- I. To establish a two year graduate program to prepare teachers for urban middle schools.
- II. To establish, implement, and evaluate a model whereby when an institution of higher education and a school district work cooperatively to prepare pre-service and inservice teachers to meet an educational need, it is so specified that the components can be adopted by other institutions.
- III. To develop, implement, and evaluate an individualized teacher education program.
- IV. To develop, implement and evaluate a competence-based teacher education program.
- V. To develop, implement and evaluate a teacher education program where modules are the instructional vehicle.

- VI. To provide teachers with competencies to meet the learning needs and styles of handicapped students who are involved maximally in the regular educational program.
- VII. To develop and implement career education modules for the Teacher Development Division, School of Education.
- VIII. To develop the portal school concept at each Teacher Corps site through use of selected university and district personnel for work with interns, team leaders, resident staff, and administrators.
- IX. To provide a model of interdisciplinary teaching within the teacher training area, School of Education, by interweaving themes and issues, content areas and guidelines in the Cycle IX Teacher Corps Middle School Teacher Development Program.
- X. To provide a model of interdisciplinary teaching within the total School of Education by utilizing faculty across division lines within the context of the Cycle IX Teacher Corps Program.

Personnel Involved in the Program

Implementation of the total program is a joint effort by both the Board and the University. The Project Director, four intern supervisors and two community para professionals comprise the Board personnel component. The University component consists of the University Coordinator, Program Specialist, Community Coordinator, two site coordinators (each a half-time position), faculty members of the instructional team, and an evaluator. Instructional team members whose time commitment varies according to program responsibility are designing and evaluating modules, instructing interns, and maintaining progress toward program objectives.

A unique feature of the personnel structure is the involvement of School of Education faculty outside of the Teacher Development Division in program design and implementation. As this occurs, the interdivisional communication and cooperation is serving as a model for new program planning within and across divisions in the School of Education.

University Budget 1974-75

Faculty Salaries	\$78,085	Supplies	\$2,202
Fringe Benefits	10,542	Travel	1,300

Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education

The Pittsburgh Middle School Teacher Corps Program demonstrates the feasibility and desirability of close cooperation between the University and the local educational agency to promote individual and joint objectives in teacher training. In so doing, there emerges the reality of on-site instruction where objectives of the teacher training program compliment and enhance existing school program and personnel resources.

Through utilization of program personnel, the concept of on-site instruction is being expanded beyond the normal boundaries of the school building to include larger aspects of the school community. Long range goals point toward a developing community/school model in which parents, teachers, and administrators work cooperatively to identify needs and provide optimal learning experiences for children.

The strengths and weaknesses of competence-based teacher education are being explored through the design, implementation and evaluation of the Pittsburgh Middle School Teacher Corps Program. This includes the examination of all delivery system components: the flexibility demanded in on-site instruction, the use of modules as instructional vehicles, the necessity for an ongoing supervisory support system, and the continual examination of the methods used to "individualize" and "personalize" instruction.

Perhaps of greatest importance is the commitment on the part of all individuals concerned with the program to operate in a climate of trust, to model those behaviors as teacher educators that are expected of teachers in training, and to maintain open lines of communication with all components of the program.

Evaluation

Formative evaluation of the program is being conducted on a continual basis. Program objectives have been identified and data is being collected

which focuses on both the attainment of objectives and the collaborative decision making process involved. Time guidelines, identified in the program proposal, are being used for discrepancy evaluation of program components. All modules are evaluated by a module review committee composed of the module writer, and selected program faculty. Changes are made as needed before the module is presented to interns.

In addition, as modules are developed and implemented in the training program, they are being made available to other programs in the School of Education and additional Pittsburgh schools for further piloting and evaluation.

It is anticipated that the summative evaluation of the program will document both the steps taken in program design and implementation and the degree of responsiveness of those involved to the dynamic forces at work in a site-oriented, competence-based teacher education program.